

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

106th Congress
1st Session

Vote No. 296

September 28, 1999, 5:30 p.m.
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3-WEEK CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS/Passage

SUBJECT: Short-Term Continuing Appropriations Resolution for fiscal year 2000 . . . H.J. Res. 68. Passage.

ACTION: JOINT RESOLUTION PASSED, 98-1

SYNOPSIS: As reported and passed, H.J. Res. 68 will make continuing appropriations through October 21 for those Federal programs and activities for which fiscal year (FY) 2000 funding has not yet been enacted. No funding will be provided for new programs. Funding for each project or activity will be continued at no more than its current rate and will be provided under the same terms and conditions as applied in FY 1999.

Those favoring passage contended:

In the last 50 years the 13 regular appropriations bills have been signed by the September 30 deadline only twice. This year, the Senate has passed its versions of all but one of the bills (that last bill is ready for floor consideration), and four conferences on those bills have been completed. In the Senate, if not the House, the process of drafting the appropriations bills has been largely bipartisan, and the bills have mostly been passing by large margins. Some delays have certainly occurred--for instance, one of the Senators who has been loudest in complaining about the slow pace herself conducted a 2-week filibuster against one amendment to one of the smaller appropriations bills, the Interior Bill. Also, it is true that it has been harder to put the bills together this year because of the tight spending caps (though for Democrats to now complain, as some have done, that too much is being spent is more than inconsistent, because on every bill but defense they have fought tooth and nail to increase spending). Overall, though, there is nothing unusual about the present pace, especially considering that Congress is controlled by a different party than is the White House. In fact, the pace is better than average, and the process in the Senate has been fairly bipartisan. We note that when Democrats controlled both Congress and the White House in the 103rd they did not finish most of the bills on time. In fact, in the first session the only ones they passed before the deadline were the Legislative Branch bill (to take care of their own salaries--it was passed in

(See other side)

YEAS (98)				NAYS (1)		NOT VOTING (1)	
Republican (53 or 98%)		Democrats (45 or 100%)		Republicans (1 or 2%)	Democrats (0 or 0%)	Republicans (1)	Democrats (0)
Abraham	Hutchinson	Akaka	Kennedy	Ashcroft		McCain- ²	
Allard	Hutchison	Baucus	Kerrey				
Bennett	Inhofe	Bayh	Kerry				
Bond	Jeffords	Biden	Kohl				
Brownback	Kyl	Bingaman	Landrieu				
Bunning	Lott	Boxer	Lautenberg				
Burns	Lugar	Breaux	Leahy				
Campbell	Mack	Bryan	Levin				
Chafee	McConnell	Byrd	Lieberman				
Cochran	Murkowski	Cleland	Lincoln				
Collins	Nickles	Conrad	Mikulski				
Coverdell	Roberts	Daschle	Moynihan				
Craig	Roth	Dodd	Murray				
Crapo	Santorum	Dorgan	Reed				
DeWine	Sessions	Durbin	Reid				
Domenici	Shelby	Edwards	Robb				
Enzi	Smith, Bob (I)	Feingold	Rockefeller				
Fitzgerald	Smith, Gordon	Feinstein	Sarbanes				
Frist	Snowe	Graham	Schumer				
Gorton	Specter	Harkin	Torricelli				
Gramm	Stevens	Hollings	Wellstone				
Grams	Thomas	Inouye	Wyden				
Grassley	Thompson	Johnson					
Gregg	Thurmond						
Hagel	Voinovich						
Hatch	Warner						
Helms							

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Business
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

August), and the foreign assistance bill (which was passed and enacted on September 30). We are not saying that we like the fact that delays are the norm rather than the exception, and we certainly do not like the end result that unfortunately has often come from this process--omnibus bills that contain some or all of the regular appropriations bills in them.

The Democrats forced a vote on this resolution for purely political reasons. They just wanted a stage from which they could complain that we Republicans were not passing the appropriations bills on time, that we were spending too much, and that we were being unfair to them. Those complaints are just for the public. They know as well as we that under our budget process the delays we are now experiencing are normal, and that, in fact, the pace is better than normal this year. They know as well as we that both Republicans and Democrats (and especially Democrats) are having difficulty keeping their spending proposals under the spending caps. Finally, they know as well as we that both sides can be quite partisan, but this year, on most of the bills, Republican Senators have worked closely with their Democrat counterparts in coming up with bipartisan proposals. We suppose that unless and until we come up with budget process reforms that obviate the need for continuing resolutions, we will periodically have to vote for them, and defend or attack them, depending on which party is in the majority. We, of course, support this pro forma resolution.

While favoring passage, some Senators expressed the following reservations:

Our Republican colleagues have got themselves into a box and now they want us to help them get out of it. They started this year by passing a Budget Resolution that reflected only Republican priorities, with its proposal for a massive tax cut and inadequate spending levels. They then went into the appropriations process committed to living by the unrealistic spending caps from the Balanced Budget Act of a few years ago. Those caps should have been changed, because if they are adhered to they will require drastic cuts in most Federal programs. With the exception of the Defense Bill and the Veterans-Housing and Urban Development Bill, Republicans then largely shut Democrats out of the process of writing the appropriations bills. The results are showing. Republicans have chosen acrimony and partisanship, which has resulted in interminable delays. Also, due to the unrealistic spending caps, Republicans have resorted to budget gimmicks to pretend that they are restraining spending at the same time as they increase it drastically. Several of the bills are so partisan they certainly will provoke vetoes. The end result probably will be some massive, omnibus spending bill late in the year. Our Republican colleagues should be embarrassed at this record of ineptness. In 1995 the year ended with an omnibus bill containing 5 regular appropriations bills; in 1996, we had a 6-bill omnibus bill; in 1998, the number was up to 8. Republicans need to learn to govern. They need to learn to draft bills that the President will sign. We support this resolution, because we do not want the Government to shut down, but we want the record to show clearly that this resolution is necessary solely because of the failures of our Republican colleagues.

No arguments were expressed in opposition to passage.